Snake in the Vines

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/71870246.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Soul Eater (Anime & Manga)
Relationship:	Arachne & Medusa Gorgon (Soul Eater)
Characters:	Medusa Gorgon (Soul Eater), Arachne (Soul Eater)
Additional Tags:	Prequel, Childhood Memories, Backstory
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2025-10-04 Completed: 2025-10-05 Words: 4,067 Chapters: 5/5

Snake in the Vines

by NonCanon (Souleaterpost)

Summary

"I wish you never slithered out of me" - for witches to say things like that to their daughters was a casual occurence, no matter how overly sympathic humans liked to frame it as the children trauma that excused their future crimes - but what was strange is that one young witch did take it to heart, the same organ that barely fit in her cramped and serpentine body.

A speculative charachter-study and backstory for Medusa.

Chapter 1: Happy Days

It wasn't strange anymore to her. Even in the miniscule length of life she had crawled on this expired easter egg, especially for witches, had thought her enough of her kind. Any contradiction was to be expected, so it was no surprise - that their tribe that shuned sentimentality, that even had mothers seen as soft if they only shouted at their kids for saying "mommy" in a too sweet vibration of the atmosphere fumes, instead of the standard double back hand slap - that it now, all of the "sisterhood" celebrated with tears and speeches and all that jazz that wasn't even invented by those pathetic humans yet.
But who did they all celebrate? Her sister ofcourse, the one that didn't need to be taught all that - or maybe she was yet she learned it all so well that she knew that to pretend it was natural to make the guilt the younger one felt for not messering up was so much bigger - a proper witch would do that. As it seemed a proper witch needed to politely accept all the blabbering and hugging one normally had to greet with a steel knife.
Still, the little witch was smart if nothing else, the nothing she was made aware of constantly, and the secret confidence in her mind was the one thing that at the end did make her be atleast somewhat simmilar to a proper waif of the great evil one. So she "got it". Arachne just made another discovery, another invention, spun another web that spread destruction and chaos as broadly as possible. And such creation even a witch's eye couldn't resist singing hymns to the glory of existance itself with the evil glimmers and shines of the retina.
"See, thats what you should have been you failure", did her mother say into her ear sweetly. It did hurt to understand that she felt a tinge to it - why couldn't she be like the other ones that didn't, that knew it was the way. Her mind allways raced, all those contradictions of now her being bad do to not conforming. Wasn't the point of their race to run to the bottom of it all, all orrder to be flushed as the hopes of any measly human escaping the grasp of their experiment or casual masscare?
But Medusa knew that all these thoughts, of her not being bad enough or not where of no importance. Witches only care for results. Thats what her sister demonstrated. And what all the others did with their words of sugar and crayons, biting the tongue that would have wispered "but wasn't she seen with that dreadful iron wizard one time too much, heh?..."
Her mother ofcourse knew that it didn't mean anything - her terrific and terrible daughter ofcourse only used that leadhead warlock for her own gains. And Arachne really did as it turned out, even if the mother was also right in the old ironic way. One's ends.

Medusa thought that to be bad enough, she should slither away during all the commotion - that is what she should do right, a good witch would do it, or not, who knows?... So she basically disapeared, her weak frame lacking the third dimmensions could slip through time itself, as the hours of these self-congratulating orgys of excess seemed to stop in the moment she saw the only other witch that did not look at her with disgust.

The girl was as mishapen as Medusa, yet ofcourse in the opposite way - seemingly a single blob of wretchedness and thrown togethers cloths - around Medusas age but not in the brain - maybe she was thus stupid enough to not understand why hanging out with Medusa was bad - not because Medusa was a black sheep, but because to any other witch it would just seem like an atempmt to brownose to Arachnes lineage, and jealousy makes one forget all the details. Like the fact that witches did have atleast one virtue humans lacked - nepotism was rare, so

Medusa's status was as worthless as all the money the witches tried to replace the humans gold with in a few centurys - another of Arachne's ideas it seems.

So Medusa talked, or better said spoke past the other creature. "Satrija, it's n- you are here too"
"Yeah, you stupid? We are supposed to be, your mother didn't hit you enough?!" answered the closets thing to a friend the blonde child ever had or ever will.

Chapter 2: Stone Cold

Witch children didn't play. Well, they never played WITH each other, unless it was in a way a cat played with a mouse - even if surprisingly their animal motives that so losely connected their powers thematically often were flipped. So no matter how cunning the snake was supposed to be, even the pathetic hamster would usually slap around Medusa, pull her hair or even poke at her eyes.
"Hehe, you see with your ear or something anyways haha..." Satrija would snort, with an expression more disgusting than even the expression "ugly cute" could allow, but hamsters are disgusting creatures - just look up what they do with their young. But not so different what any other animal does, on retrospect.
That is what Medusa told herself, even if just taking it also contradicted with all the instincts she should sing praises to. Because she just took the hazing from her seemingly natural superior, secretly fearing that one upping Satrija, reversing this hierachy, would only make the hamster flee, escape this wheel of tormenting Medusa. Because atleast having her, let Medusa pretend she was not alone.
Yet being alone is what all witches had to strife for. Independece was the highest reward, even if paradoxically one truely seemed to only get it when all others praised once lack of need of help. As they all did with her big sister Arachne. The spiderwitch seemed to relish in it, maybe even a bit too much - maybe this need, even if different, was the one thing that made the sisters have any kind of resemblance.

That and other things flew through the young girl's mind in the seconds between one slap and another tear. Maybe they let her surpress her wish to actually play "with" for once and not "against" somebody... Yet actually such a opportunity did arive, as unexpected as Medusas future looked to the few that were old enough to remember her humble beginnings. Because there was one exception - two witches, no matter how young, in one circumstance could act together without too much competition - when scheming.

So Satrija grumbled:
"Hey, you snake must be smart. My spawner told me I had to get some "experience", whatever that means. So come up with a plan quick!"
Medusa's eyes glimmered for a second - yet then realisation set in - because all the countless plans in her head were too evil - they actually were bad in a way that witches are reprimanded for - all where escapes, ways to hide for ever, or to sleep forever - she knew that to crave her own destruction was a nono, even if funnily enough it made the witches want it for her even more. How silly isn't it, why can't she just do, or why can't she just slither away, then they will all have the freedom to imagine countless versions of her demise, of her doom,of all the horrible things the humans did to her to "make her pay".

But that last part... Medusa allways had the secret wish, that maybe humans, if they are as pathetic as her, may be as broken as her too. Maybe they would not poke her that hard, maybe they wouldn't spit and laugh at her shrieking back at just evil glance of an elder witch. So humans, as some desire she knew was just as dumb as her fear of doing what must be done as witch, were allways on her mind, but this time on her tongue.

"Maybe the humans-"

"Haha, how horrible! How terrific!" gargled Satrija out of her mouth full of teeth too big too contain them, yet large enough for all the food she gourged down, - "Yeah, we can kill some and then we will be real witches!"

Medusa was terrified. Of it all. Yes it all. The reasons not even all being able to be contained in her precoucious mind. So as Satrija dumbly started this non-plan, waiting for some human children to innocently pass by, holding just a rock in her hands, with her lack of any focused magic making her want to destroy and maim stronger, Medusa was just like an animal, a snake following the heat of hell as all infrared vision of the biological machine they all were told her too.

A boy passed by, and Satrija shucked the stone with all her lacking might. It flew by, really, so far did it go that the boy at first did not even register that it was supposed to go anywhere near him. Still, he must have been one superstitious kids, cause he immediatley started shouting "Witch witch!"
Satrija didn't wait and took another stone, and this time feeling discouraged by her lack of aim, just tried to smash the boys head in without the sabotage of artilery sciences. Yet even then witches are so treacherous, that even their motor functions sometimes betray them. So Satrijas clumsy attempt only hit the frozen boy on his arm.

Still the child, less brave than he imagined him, hearing all the storys about brave hunters between hours of grueling crop work and wood collecting, just muttered "Help..."
Medusa saw it as her signal - not to be of assitance to the boy, that would be the biggest sin, no ofcourse not... But that she had to assisst Satrija with the stoning. So with trembling fingers that wrapped around a devilishly sharp stone like vines that overgrew some abandoned mansion full of family drama and deceit, Medusa was ready. She swung, with a pain a witch should never feel, the hurt of the consience of killing an innocent child, so her snake eyes rolled over and the dice of fate fell.

What roll it was. It seemd some trance came over Medusa, because the next thing she heard was "Oh brave girl, you save me from that disgusting creature!"

It seems, that Medusa while in motion to attack the boy, slipped and fell exactly in the way to strike her so-so-so-much-wannabe-friends head, killing her instantly.

For the first time, her witch instincts saved her from any mental breakdown she was so long overdo for. "A witch has to be treacherous... Killing another witch for my own gain is what I'm supposed to do right.." Yet these thoughts did not make her tears stop. Yet even they seemed to be a cosmic tool of deceiption, because it only made the boy be more thankful.

"Oh what a sorry excuse of man I am! Poor girl, I forced you to sully your hands and do something so brave! A poor thing like you should be save by me yet alas, I was the one that needed saving! My father should beat me for this!"

Those last words were strangely both reasuring yet nauseating for Medusa, the reasons she would sadly learn in a chapter of two...

Chapter 3: Eye for an Eye

Medusa had heard about witch burnings. They allways sounded strange to her, not because of their brutality or their dubious usefullness for the humans, but the way other witches would spill over terror and sentimentality when ever mentioning them. Where was the strength and reverance to the beauty of despair the sisterhood praised so much? Shouldn't a real witch say "that's what she deserved for getting caught, she was weak!", instead of this solidarity? But Medusa knew she must have been wrong.
As wrong as she felt after the burning of the corpse of her former secret comrade. The paleness of her face wasn't noticed, or better was just seen as more proof that she was a normal starved poor girl who was scared that the beast could come back to live at any moment - who would have suspected that Medusa felt any sympathy and regret, humans didn't know that even a proper witch fears for her own life as the flames lick the fats and bones on the corpse of the brides of the devil.
Yet Medusa's emotions were overwhelemd by the confounding thoughts she had after seeing what happened next - the patriach of the little boys family took the fresh ashes, put them into a boiling pot, and after stiring and mixing for a bit, poured the grotesque liquid for all the not so happy family to put down their throaths. It almost looked the same as any bog standard witch ritual, just with less frog eyes or, well, bog-fluids.
"Drink, you will get her strength and protection, you need it" Said the boys father, with eyes that allmost seemed blank and cloudy as the full moon on a foggy night. As Medusa did during every convent, she drank against her better judgment, maybe because just for the moment she felt the feeling she secretly longed for, the feeling of community and her having enough worth to be inlcuded and receiving of something all are.
So she drank the ashes of the one she allways wanted to use the word "friend" for.

So Medusa lived for a few days in a cabin in the woods, doing the manual labour even her frail body was able to not fully fail at. The lack of words and concrete statments laid from her mouth did not build confidence, yet also sometimes less is more. It was easy to assume that she was a poor child. Even though she knew as a witch she was never allowed to consider herself that, no matter how she wanted, just for a moment. So the father did not complain, gave her the portion and allowed the boy to interact with her, the five minutes of free time they had before the daily toil dragged everyone into the brief escape from tomorrows repetition.
Medusa wanted to recall some of those moments that must have been oh so sweet, a real friend - yet she can't, even in the centurys after she dreamed of it, yet those visons never came. Maybe blocked out by the events that came after.

A strange man came to the cabin a few days after. Wearing only an old and stained robe, with hair as disheveled as any other mortal who did not taste any aristocratic luxarys. Yet he seemed to be of a higher station still somehow. A aura of a monk or priest radiated from him, yet on his forehead the opposite could be read. Drawn with blood or any other red liquid a red eye.

He talked to them all about the real freedom of madness, of the greatness of it, how he joined the real religion that saw through the lies of Death's institution. The family was confused by

these words as much as they were humored by them. They didn't care for Death, yet neither was life for them more than the routine of work and brief moments of song and pleasure. Yet Medusa listened, because these words seemed familiar. Yet also more than that - like something that never made full sense clicked as a dislocated bone after a painful but correcting notion. Her whole life felt the sweet pain of finally getting it.

"Sadly even the monks I joined where corruped, they forgot madness and fell back into the order of suffering and exploitation. They even all did the most horrible thing, finding orphans to sell for earthly riches!" The father laughed at that. Medusa, in the moment saw the monks contradiction, yet could not fault it, she felt a strange warmness to him, something she rarely ever did, maybe to the boy after he thanked her, or his mother after once giving her an extra spoon of gruel and flashing a quick smile.

But the next smile Medusa saw was not so honey sweet.

Chapter 4: Cat out the Bag

Medusa had great eyesight. It may have been the opposite of what a snake should have had, yet she could never fault herself for it, she even sensed some pride, something that took many years to feel more often. So when she, even in the middle of the night,opened her eyes and saw only darkness, she understood something was right. Next was the feeling of cloth around her. She was in a bag. And she was smart enough to put it all together.

The father, who found the monk so amusing, still was clever enough to hear one detail that made him forget the sliver of the Lord's order he tried to half-assedlly live by. He thought, he had already done more than enough, let a poor girl experience family life, fed her, made her existance more joyus than it would have ever been otherwise. Why was he required to do it forever, and was it not only be fair to be rewarded for it too, not like this new "Lord" that ruled now had any better offer, no rewards as the previous Gods he only heard wispers as a child from the oldest of the village elders. Ancient superstition was dead, but this new age was all about concrete profit, well besides the witch-ash concotion he saw in one of his visons, that was for good luck, the one true God.

So the father dragged the snake in a bag down the path were he had previously scouted out the location of one of those 3 eyed monks business partners. Giving them a child should reward him enough to not have to toil for two winters atleast, his concotion must have been paying of already to have such fortune befall him, it was only right, only natural. But ofcourse, the heretic of the heretics somehow got wind of it.

"Let that child go! How can you not see the wickedness of this twisted order! If you only joined the true madness we would be free of this endless cycle of abuse, of selling our own children!"

"You stupid, just say it is madness to do it, so it is good by your new religion, or is it old again, you frail spoiled failure" - the man knew not only when to hit a child not to spoil it, but also any other man that he allready saw as rotten.

Yet his own son also came running, realising the girl was missing and at first suspecting the creepy traveler. Yet even his daftness was removed and he quickly saw that it was his own future self that was at fault.

"F-father, y-yo-"

Medusa only heard a hit, and a quick sob. "Obey me, that is the way, understand?"

"Y-yes" said the child with a voice, robbed of any rebelion, of anything so mad as to disobey one's father - Medusa even stuck in this bag had seen it eyes that need no light.

Next she heard a quick struggle, a slash and the monk squeeling, the opposite of manly tears and a small light, first redish but then a vibrant blue, strong enough to shine through the fabric that concealed her so poorly from the ugly truth of all these happenings.

The bag was torn into pieces, so was the father.

Without realising it, Medusa had fallen for a so familiar cliche, finding her powers at the best yet worst moment. Shapes of movement darker than any black so vibrant at the same time they shined in the shadow of the night had pierced the delivery man, a crimson fountain quickly gave away for one singular crimson light.

The girl did not know what to feel or think, only to say things that were too wrong or too right, she never could figure out what was needed at what moment, yet the witches and humans seemed to teach her the same in the end, so with a nervous grin she spoke to the boy the final line before he ran away from her life and his for good.

"Oh, you can use those two as lights to find your way home"

Chapter 5: Time will Tell

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Medusa found out from a bunch of joyfull witches what she had to pretend. They all thought that it was all part of her briliant plan, that she first finally found the perfect moment to finish the food she played with, the pathetic useless hamster witch Satrija, and then lured the family into a feeling of safety, finding a perfect moment to use her powers and field test them, leaving the rest of the cabin for older witches to have their fun with.

"She, she isn't that hopeless, far away from Arachne, yet she is learning too haha"

Medusa could only grin. Her teeth nearly bleeded from being pressed that hard against each other, gnashing with every thought of the boy she "saved" being dead too, and of the feeling that her secret fantasy of the witches actually being bad and the humans being good being dashed. In the end it was all the same, yet even that she couldn't say out loud.

The witches loved their hypocrisy too much, they loved both pretending to be cruel and strong yet whining about the brutality of humans. And it only became more and more hard for Medusa to bear - maybe it was her witch side awakening, her weakness and empathy, the traits that made her such an abomination, gave away to a kind of arrogance.

"Can't they see? They are the same? How pathetic are they, how much can they cry? Be proud if you are!"

These thoughts raced in Medusa's head as the years turned, maybe she refueled them, to make her forget about the much more depresing realisation, that maybe there was "good" yet not in this world, not this order.

She had the same thoughts as Arachne blew up a bunch of her "sisters" and at how they condemend her for creating "weapons". Witches as peace mongeres, really...

All of them so proud of their cunning, yet only she Medusa the late bloomer knew, or atleast was paranoid enough to suspect, that Arachne still was there, she wouldn't die so easily.

The others did though. And Medusa did not know if to be happy or sad about it - with all her intellegence she couldn't figure out a lot of stuff in the end, maybe she allways stayed the failure, the shapeless snake, lacking either the grotesqueness of a true elder witch nor the aluring charm her sister had that could turn any human into a mindless sycophant - a destruction of not body but spirit, something she as a witch allways felt guilt for being more disgusted by than enjoying. The one thing that would have condmened her to instant death, to be declared a bigger heretic than Arachne, more than her childhood compassion or juvenile idealism was her secretly being a big romantic...

Yes, it was not even lust, that atleast would have made it ok, but as the years passed the longing grew. As the years past, all the cruelty by the witches and humans alike, by the fact

this "order" was in the end worshiped by both, the king and queen of both side becoming more and more caricatures that either never spoke or couldn't shut up.

Medusa's pharmakon of soothing thoughts slowly turned into a poison, a toxin that would in the future corrupt a fair share of minds, but at first did her own in. After countless atempts of giving a chance to another witch, yet being rewarded with a spit in the face - after countless atempts to find a sympathic human, only for them to crumble by the weakness of either their body or spirit - she just grew yet more and more bitter.

Yet in the end, she remained sentimental, guess every true evil is. As she abandoned any empathy, sympathy or any other sweet talk baby nonsense, there was one thing she could not let slide. The pathetic weak monk, she tried to say she had forgoten him. Yet atleast, she would allways remember one of his story "That reaper! Stuck him into a bag of his own skin for!"

Medusa's big heart could not let that stand, nor the order that made such cruelty be possible. Forward to a better world...

Chapter End Notes

eh, dunno, guess was in an emberassingly misanthropic mood that made me feel like an edgy teenager again, so why not vent in such a "cringe" way, maybe there was something to like, maybe not.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!